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Aspects Regarding The Issue Of People Who Are Deprived

Alina Costin^{a*}^a Aurel Vlaicu University of Arad, 310330, Romania

Abstract

The poor socio-professional insertion of former inmates has become a real and more acute problem in a troubled economic context. The difficulties which they signal are related to the lack of cooperation networks with community centres to mobilize all the available resources, a low availability of the community to accept them, the reluctance of employers to give them a chance plus the lack of family or addictions they have developed in prison. This study presents a sketch of the perspectives of employability of inmates based on documentation reports, statistics and studies made so far.

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1. Introduction

From a human rights perspective, the person who has committed a crime is itself a victim of its own inadaptability, a victim of the system, who should be helped to improve. Reinsertion strategies, specific programmes and many projects do not seem to achieve social reinsertion as the number of repeat offenders in our country always increases. 46% or even more of them go back to prison, detainees lack the motivation and determination to return and succeed outside of prison. Why? A simple observation of what happens "outside" is sufficient. In prison they are provided with accommodation, food; for most of them, these conditions are absolutely sufficient. Freedom does not offer them anything, neither a job, nor friends. Not even a family in most cases. What is the situation of detainees in Romania, what social programmes run in prisons and how the prisoners are prepared for release are a few questions that led me to my paper on the situation of persons deprived of freedom.

* Alina Costin. Tel.: +0040-753-029-024

E-mail address: alinacostin@uav.ro

2. Methodology

This study is intended to be a documentary on the issue of detainees, given the issues connected to their training and labour market insertion prospects. For this purpose, we applied a document analysis, a method which allowed us to obtain relevant information about the programmes run in prison aiming to train the inmates.

3. Results of documentation

It is widely acknowledged that the periods of economic crisis bring along diverse social phenomena, such as an increase in crime rates. The situation referring to the number of inmates is represented in the table below (The National Administration of Penitentiaries; Activity Report, 2012):

Table 1. The evolution of the number of inmates in the period 2008-2012

No.	Year	Total effective
1	2008	26.212
2	2009	26.716
3	2010	28.244
4	2011	30.694
5	2012	31.817
6	2013 (in August)	33.000

Source: / The National Administration of Penitentiaries; Report, 2012

Most likely the problem of socio-professional integration of the prison liberated people is a global one, but it is much more accentuated where there is a lack of institutional support structures for them. The great number of people that relapse is questioning not the efficiency of the programs used in penitentiaries but the lack of support that is offered after release. It is true that the training programs the prisoners have access to are not always adapted to the socio-economical context, and the dialogue between the state institutions and the private ones is scanty. Under these circumstances, the real inclusion chance of these people are significantly decreasing. Therefore, the solution that is foreshadowed is the establishment of some support networks or inclusion centers in order to interpose between the released person and the community. The specialists recommend the guidance of the convicts to traditional ecological jobs (growing plants of animals, workers, constructors etc.), because of the reduced credibility due to their criminal records (Băluță. 2012: 137). The training for these spheres of activity can be achieved within training centers founded near penitentiaries. The penitentiary service tries to involve in projects that are common to the community, thus creating a link between this and the prisoners. Important projects initiated within the pale of the prison aim to emphasize that the convict is the product of the environment it lives in, which suggests the existence of a responsibility which a community has towards its members. The same dialogue must be restored between the state institutions and the nongovernmental ones that cooperate in a scanty way according to the penitentiary reports. For this reason, it must be remembered that there are only three centres for their inclusion in all the country: Alba Iulia, Baia Mare and the third one in Braila. The purpose of these centres is, therefore, to increase their chances of labour market and community insertion by making preparation programmes for the release, such as training courses, guidance on finding a job, counselling, organizing jobs fairs. For this same reason one organizes jobs fairs for prisoners, employers submit their offers to detainees who are preparing for their release (this meeting actually takes place in the penitentiary). So, the preparation for starting over life in liberty is made during all detention period through different activities. The continuation of their studies is the first target. The statistics provided by the ANP shows the following (The National Administration of Penitentiaries; Activity Report, 2012)

Table 2. The comparative situation of the inmates who take part in educational activities

No.	Years of study	Effective
1	2009-2010	2131
2	2010-2011	2421
3	2011-2012	2605
4	2012-2013	2696

Source: The National Administration of Penitentiaries; Report, 2012

The return of former inmates and their integration into society"(Figure 1)



Source: <http://www.suntemprodusulmediului.ro>

The rising number of inmates enrolled in educational attainment does not necessarily indicate their interest in school or vocational training. The workshops made with them in one prison in the country revealed that they know very well the law and the "pathways" to reduce the period of their detention, and a good conduct and attending classes are two of the most important ways. The number of inmates enrolled in school courses in the year 2012-2013 (*The Report of the National Agency of Employment*, 2013).

- Primary school: 1090;
- Secondary school: 1206
- High school or technologic: 395

Based on a protocol with county employment agencies, inmates with less than 9 months left until their release may require participation in a training course. In recent years, the number of professional training courses organized in prisons increased from: 133 in 2009, 229 in 2011 and 335 in 2012. There is also an increase in the number of inmates participating in training and professional initiation courses. In 2012, the situation in this field was as follows: 1465 inmates participated in vocational initiation courses in the fields of computer operator, technical and photographic art, construction, woodworking, masonry, services and 2757 convicted persons received vocational training courses in 27 trades, 70 underaged, 163 women, and 2524 adults (Costin, 2014). 10% of the expenses involved in the maintenance and insurance of the services of the inmates are provided by the prisons from the revenues obtained from lucrative activities:

Table 3. Revenues obtained from lucrative activities 2009-2012

No.	Year	Revenues
1	2009	19.583 mil
2	2010	20.089 mil
3	2011	25,809 mil
4	2012	29,7 mil.

Source: ANP, Activity report, 2012

The interviews carried out with persons that are deprived of freedom from a maximum security prison from the country find a lot of prisoners "pleased" with the conditions they have and preoccupied with their future outside the penitentiary, but unmotivated to find solutions for integration in a society that "offers less than the prison". This fact is surprising but it indicated that they are aware of the difficulties they have to face "outside". A quick evaluation of their perception looking at these obstacles shows that their greatest fear is related to the perception of the society and the weak acceptance from the community they are about to step in. They believe that the most important factor that encourages their integration is the community. The National Agency of Penitentiaries

frequently organizes campaigns to encourage community to accept labour force represented by detainees, "*Romanian prisoner, looking for work. I work cheaply and do not steal*" was a headline in the newspaper last year (www.ziarulring.ro) that encouraged and invited businessmen to employ prisoners strictly supervised by guards during activities (Costin.2014). Reality shows that the availability shown by the employers to this segment of people is rather low: only 454 of them have responded positively to job fairs held in 30 prisons. 729 inmates met with employers, 73 of them have signed pre-contracts as future employees and 15 people were employed (ANP report, 2012). The detainees are one of the most disadvantaged categories on the labour market; that is why the employment social policy includes measures to stimulate employment for employers who hire these people; however, the results are not those expected. The National Strategy for Reinsertion of People Deprived of their Freedom 2012-2016 highlights the need to facilitate job assistance post detention at a systemic level and to make the representatives of the community aware of the issue of detainees. Examples of good practice on the preparation for the reinsertion time were identified in Sweden, Germany, Denmark, models which are going to be adapted in our country. An ongoing project which aims to develop an integrated inter-institutional mechanism to reinsert former prisoners into society makes the following recommendations to facilitate the employment of a prisoner:

- Organizing qualification training according to the needs of the labor market, addressed to the people liberated from prison; for this the partnership between ANOFM and ANP must be strengthened;
- Creating conditions for the participation to the training courses in the community assuring in this way kind of a "progressive shift to freedom";
- The delegation of clear responsibilities to social services, employment agencies, health services which can come to the aid of the insertion and monitoring of the newly released prisoner.

4. Conclusion

I consider that there are three key dimensions in the increase of the chances of insertion of former prisoners: an important pillar in building a new life after release is the connection with the family. The feeling of belonging to a group, the feeling of being accepted are defining elements in determining the prisoner to want to be a member of a society functioning by social norms. The professional skills and recommendations from employers and the prison can open up a more secure insertion, and mediation with the civil society and the labour market could be achieved by the inclusion centres.

Resources:

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